

of research and development, evidence shows the returns to new products exceed normal rates of return.

Drug companies continue to raise prices on consumers without justification, and we must crack down on price gouging and enforce transparency and drug pricing. That is why I strongly support the policies the Senate Finance Committee recently released, which comprise of comprehensive reform to lower prescription drug prices for Americans.

One policy included in this package that I have long supported is empowering Medicare to begin negotiating directly for the price of prescription drugs. This is just common sense. This is what businesses do. This is a free market. We negotiate.

In the private sector, no plan sponsor or manager would ever accept responsibility without the ability to decide how to negotiate. No private sector company would parcel themselves out in order to negotiate; they would use their full size as a market force. We don't do that in Medicare. Medicare negotiations will ensure that patients with Medicare get the best deal possible on high-priced drugs.

Another policy I support in prescription drug affordability is capping Medicare patients' out-of-pocket costs at no more than \$2,000 per year. Today, there is no cap on spending for prescription drugs for seniors on Medicare. This policy will prevent Medicare beneficiaries from paying tens of thousands of dollars to purchase lifesaving drugs prescribed by their doctors.

The policies I have just outlined, along with additional reforms—and there are several others that are included in this package, including a required rebate if a drug manufacturer increases their price beyond the cost of inflation. There are other issues here to protect the solvency long term of prescription drug benefits and Medicare beneficiaries. This will make prescription drugs affordable for individuals and families who desperately need it.

I urge all my colleagues to come together to address this urgent issue. We have done the work. Now it is time to vote, getting these savings back into our constituents' pockets.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator from Maryland.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 924, 979, 982, and 983; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President immediately be notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Alexander Mark Laskaris, of the District of Columbia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Chad; Margaret C. Whitman, of Colorado, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Kenya; Michael J. Adler, of Maryland, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of South Sudan; and John T. Godfrey, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of the Sudan?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 987 and 1039; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Stephen Henley Locher, of Iowa, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Iowa; and Michael Cottman Morgan, of Wisconsin, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. HAWLEY. Madam President, following my submission yesterday, I ask

unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the next part of an investigation directed by the U.S. Central Command concerning the Abbey Gate bombing in Afghanistan in August 2021.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ACTS-SCK-DO

Subject: Findings and Recommendation—Attack Against U.S. Forces Conducting NEO at Hamid Karzai International Airport on 26 August 2021

(5) 82nd Airborne Division and 1/82 IBCT.

(a) The 82nd Airborne and 1/82 IBCT, (as the designated Immediate Response Force (IRF)), were notified for deployment at the request of Gen McKenzie (exhibits 10, 13, 21). 1/82 IBCT and 2/504 Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) began the flow of forces to HKIA on 15 August at 2200, and arrived with approximately 300 personnel (exhibit 121). This force coordinated with JTF-CR and occupied Camp Alvarado in the northwest corner of HKIA (exhibit 121). During the period of darkness on 16–17 August, 2/501 PIR arrived to HKIA (exhibit 123). Elements of the brigade's artillery battalion arrived with the infantry battalion, making the total force about 1000 (exhibit 121). Shortly after their arrival, 2/504 began securing the airfield, as civilians had breached the South Terminal and were on the runway (exhibit 121). 2/501 were immediately put into the line at the South Terminal when they arrived a little over 24 hours later (exhibit 121). Both units took up security positions on the South and West of HKIA, and expanded to relieve Marines on the perimeter so they could begin opening gates on 19 August (exhibits 121, 123). By 18 August, 1/82 had security responsibility for all of the West side of HKIA. 2/501 had responsibility for security from the perimeter at Abbey Gate westward to the International Terminal (exhibit 123).

(b) The 82nd Airborne TAC, commanded by MG Donahue, arrived on 18 August at approximately 1200 (exhibits 121, 125). Upon arrival, MG Donahue conducted a leader's reconnaissance, assessed the perimeter and gates, met with RADM Vasely to shore up the task organization, and began initial planning for withdrawal and JTE (exhibit 125). The 82nd started clearing the HKIA road system to prepare for MASCAL events and quick reaction force (QRF) movements (exhibit 125). As part of their security task, the 82nd detained 40–50 people each night who jumped the airfield fence (exhibit 125). Additionally, 1/82 operated two gates and flowed in evacuees via the South and West Gates (exhibit 121). From 19–25 August, 2/501 processed and directed convoys of evacuees the Taliban had allowed to pass through the outer cordon at South Gate (exhibit 121). 1/82 opened West Gate periodically to allow precision evacuation passages of lines, which were coordinated movements (exhibits 121, 125). During the latter half of the NEO, South and West Gates accounted for a significant number of daily evacuees, averaging greater than 200 daily from 24–30 August, with 1600 coming through on 26 August (exhibits 125, 143). The DoS Consular rarely worked with 1/82 personnel at South Gate, so the convoys had to be American citizens (AMCITs) or Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) to get through (exhibit 123). Starting 19 August, MG Donahue served as the primary coordinator with the Taliban LNO, (TEXT REDACTED) and spoke with him on a near daily basis (exhibit 23, 125). 1/82 IBCT subordinate unit commanders coordinated directly with the Taliban local gate commanders for security and to facilitate evacuee movements (exhibits 121, 123, 125).